

## Figure F: The Features of Academic Language in WIDA's Standards

The Features of Academic Language operate within sociocultural contexts for language use.

|                          | <b>Performance Criteria</b>  | <b>Features</b>   |
|--------------------------|--|---|
| <b>Discourse Level</b>   | <b>Linguistic Complexity</b><br><i>(Quantity and variety of oral and written text)</i>         | Amount of speech/written text<br>Structure of speech/written text<br>Density of speech/written text<br>Organization and cohesion of ideas<br>Variety of sentence types      |
| <b>Sentence Level</b>    | <b>Language Forms and Conventions</b><br><i>(Types, array, and use of language structures)</i> | Types and variety of grammatical structures<br>Conventions, mechanics, and fluency<br>Match of language forms to purpose/perspective  |
| <b>Word/Phrase Level</b> | <b>Vocabulary Usage</b><br><i>(Specificity of word or phrase choice)</i>                       | General, specific, and technical language<br>Multiple meanings of words and phrases<br>Formulaic and idiomatic expressions<br>Nuances and shades of meaning<br>Collocations |

The sociocultural contexts for language use involve the interaction between the student and the language environment, encompassing the...

- Register
- Genre/Text type
- Topic
- Task/Situation
- Participants' identities and social roles



The three criteria used to define each level of language proficiency are displayed in two sets of **PERFORMANCE DEFINITIONS**. One set of Performance Definitions (see Figure G) is for receptive language and represents how ELLs process language to comprehend information, ideas, or concepts in either oral or written communication. The other set of Performance Definitions (see Figure H) is for productive language and shows how students use language to express information, ideas, or concepts in either oral or written communication.



**Figure G: WIDA Performance Definitions Listening and Reading, Grades K-12**

At each grade, toward the end of a given level of English language proficiency, and with instructional support, English language learners will process...

| Linguistic Complexity                                      | Discourse Level   | Sentence Level  | Word/Phrase Level  |
|--|---|---|--|
| Level 6 – Reaching   |   |   |  |
| Language that meets all criteria through Level 5, Bridging |   |   |  |
| <b>Level 5<br/>Bridging</b>                                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rich descriptive discourse with complex sentences</li> <li>Cohesive and organized related ideas</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Compound, complex grammatical constructions (e.g., multiple phrases and clauses)</li> <li>A broad range of sentence patterns characteristic of particular content areas</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Technical and abstract content-area language, including content-specific collocations</li> <li>Words and expressions with shades of meaning across content areas</li> </ul> |
| <b>Level 4<br/>Expanding</b>                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Connected discourse with a variety of sentences</li> <li>Expanded related ideas</li> </ul>                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A variety of complex grammatical constructions</li> <li>Sentence patterns characteristic of particular content areas</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Specific and some technical content-area language</li> <li>Words or expressions with multiple meanings across content areas</li> </ul>                                      |
| <b>Level 3<br/>Developing</b>                              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discourse with a series of extended sentences</li> <li>Related ideas</li> </ul>                            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Compound and some complex (e.g., noun phrase, verb phrase, prepositional phrase) grammatical constructions</li> <li>Sentence patterns across content areas</li> </ul>              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Specific content language, including expressions</li> <li>Words and expressions with common collocations and idioms across content areas</li> </ul>                         |
| <b>Level 2<br/>Emerging</b>                                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Multiple related simple sentences</li> <li>An idea with details</li> </ul>                                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Compound grammatical constructions</li> <li>Repetitive phrasal and sentence patterns across content areas</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>General content words and expressions, including cognates</li> <li>Social and instructional words and expressions across content areas</li> </ul>                           |
| <b>Level 1<br/>Entering</b>                                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Single statements or questions</li> <li>An idea within words, phrases, or chunks of language</li> </ul>    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Simple grammatical constructions (e.g., commands, Wh- questions, declaratives)</li> <li>Common social and instructional forms and patterns</li> </ul>                              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>General content-related words</li> <li>Everyday social and instructional words and expressions</li> </ul>   |

...within sociocultural contexts for language use.

**Figure H: WIDA Performance Definitions Speaking and Writing, Grades K-12**

At each grade, toward the end of a given level of English language proficiency, and with instructional support, English language learners will produce...

|  |  | <b>Discourse Level</b>  | <b>Sentence Level</b>  | <b>Word/Phrase Level</b> |
|--|--|---|--|--------------------------|
|  |  | <b>Linguistic Complexity</b>  | <b>Language Forms and Conventions</b>  | <b>Vocabulary Usage</b>  |
| <b>Level 6 – Reaching</b> Language that meets all criteria through Level 5, Bridging |  |   |  |                          |
| <b>Level 5<br/>Bridging</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Multiple, complex sentences</li> <li>Organized, cohesive, and coherent expression of ideas</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A variety of grammatical structures matched to purpose</li> <li>A broad range of sentence patterns characteristic of particular content areas</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Technical and abstract content-area language, including content-specific collocations</li> <li>Words and expressions with shades of meaning across content areas</li> </ul>     |                          |
| <b>Level 4<br/>Expanding</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Short, expanded, and some complex sentences</li> <li>Organized expression of ideas with emerging cohesion</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A variety of grammatical structures</li> <li>Sentence patterns characteristic of particular content areas</li> </ul>                                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Specific and some technical content-area language</li> <li>Words and expressions with expressive meaning through use of collocations and idioms across content areas</li> </ul> |                          |
| <b>Level 3<br/>Developing</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Short and some expanded sentences with emerging complexity</li> <li>Expanded expression of one idea or emerging expression of multiple related ideas</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Repetitive grammatical structures with occasional variation</li> <li>Sentence patterns across content areas</li> </ul>                                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Specific content language, including cognates and expressions</li> <li>Words or expressions with multiple meanings used across content areas</li> </ul>                         |                          |
| <b>Level 2<br/>Emerging</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Phrases or short sentences</li> <li>Emerging expression of ideas</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Formulaic grammatical structures</li> <li>Repetitive phrasal and sentence patterns across content areas</li> </ul>                                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>General content words and expressions</li> <li>Social and instructional words and expressions across content areas</li> </ul>   |                          |
| <b>Level 1<br/>Entering</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Words, phrases, or chunks of language</li> <li>Single words used to represent ideas</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Phrase-level grammatical structures</li> <li>Phrasal patterns associated with common social and instructional situations</li> </ul>                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>General content-related words</li> <li>Everyday social and instructional words and expressions</li> </ul>   |                          |

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